

THE EPIDEMIC OF ACQUIRED IMMUNE DEFICIENCY SYNDROME ON THE CONTINENT OF AFRICA

[Adopted by the Twenty-third General Synod in Kansas City, Missouri on July 16, 2001]

WHEREAS at the dawn of a new century and a new millennium, we, as a faith community, believing in Jesus Christ, are called on to follow his example and to heed his teachings, to tend his lambs, to hear and respond to the loud wails and the stifled cries of those who are suffering in our world community;

WHEREAS at the dawn of this new century and new millennium, the dread disease of HIV/AIDS continues to plague the world community, bringing particular suffering and devastation to our brothers and sisters on the great continent of Africa;

WHEREAS in the last year, over two-and-one-half million persons in Africa have died from HIV/AIDS and related diseases, with every indication that those numbers will increase in the coming years;

WHEREAS the suffering of women and children in African countries has been particularly acute, spawning the prospect of millions of orphaned children in one generation, many faced with the task of raising themselves;

WHEREAS the United Church of Christ has declared its passionate concern and support for all who are victims of Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS) and the opportunistic diseases it enables; and

WHEREAS the United Church of Christ is empowered to convey its concerns and impact on the communities of local churches, as well as in the nation and in the global community, and is empowered to impact on public policy;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Twenty-third General Synod:

Calls on the United Church of Christ, through its pastoral leadership and through its Covenanted Ministries, particularly Wider Church Ministries and Local Church Ministries, to continue the commitment made in the Proposal for Action regarding the Pronouncement for Health and Wholeness in the Midst of a Pandemic, which was adopted by the Sixteenth General Synod, to wit, to provide information to local churches, Associations, and Conferences on how the United Church of Christ is responding to the AIDS crisis in Africa and how these groups may further assist this response;

Calls on the United Church of Christ, through the Office of the General Minister and President and through Justice and Witness Ministries and Wider Church Ministries, to convey to the President of the United States, the Congress of the United States, and other appropriate governmental bodies, the concern of its constituencies about the AIDS crisis in Africa, and its advocacy and support of any executive or legislative action aimed at reducing substantially, or forgiving altogether, the economic debt to the United States of America of those African nations whose economies are overburdened by same, and where the effects of the AIDS crisis are particularly severe; and

Calls on the United Church of Christ, through the Office of the General Minister and President and through the Justice and Witness and Wider Church Ministries, to convey to the appropriate executive or legislative bodies its advocacy and support of the implementation of international trade regulations that help to reduce the prohibitively high cost and increase the availability of HIV/AIDS treatment drugs in areas where they are desperately needed.

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED that the Twenty-third General Synod, in adopting this resolution of concern, calls on the United Church of Christ to engage in meaningful and prayerful dialogue with our partner churches on the African continent and to actively seek to raise the consciousness, awareness, and concern of the global religious community in its efforts to ease the pain and suffering caused by this terrible affliction to the human family.

Funding for this action will be made in accordance with the overall mandates of the affected agencies and the funds available.